

## Message Text

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ACTION VO-03

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SCA-01 INSE-00 PRS-01 /018 W  
----- 042577 /21

P 171000Z DEC 76  
FM AMCONSUL GENOA  
TO SECSTATE WASH DC 1859  
AMEMBASSY ROME

C O N F I D E N T I A L GENOA 0778

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CVIS, IT, US

SUBJECT: PRESS CRITICAL OF US VISA POLICIES

ROME; PLEASE PASS ALL CONSULATES IN ITALY

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

SUMMARY

CONSULATE GENERAL'S INITIAL REFUSAL DECEMBER 10 OF "C"  
VISAS TO 7 SEAMEN MEMBERS OF THE CGIL PROVOKED WHAT APPEARS  
TO BE A WELL-ORCHESTRATED PRESS CAMPAIGN IN LOCAL PAPERS  
WHICH IS NOT ONLY CRITICAL OF OUR VISA POLICIES BUT ALSO  
IMPLIES THAT POST PURSUING "MCCARTHY ERA" TACTICS VIS-A-VIS  
PCI. TONE OF PRESS ARTICLES IS THAT USG "BUCKLED UNDER" TO  
CGIL PRESSURES ULTIMATELY TO GRANT WAIVERS.

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END SUMMARY.

1. THE REFUSAL OF NIV'S TO SEVEN CREWMEMBERS, WHO READILY  
ACKNOWLEDGED MEMBERSHIP IN THE CGIL-FILM SEAMEN'S UNION, HAS  
CALLED LOCAL PRESS ATTENTION TO USG VISA POLICIES. THE  
SEVEN APPLICANTS WERE PART OF GROUP OF APPROXIMATELY 200  
APPLYING FOR "C" AND "D" CATEGORY VISAS LATE AFTERNOON ON  
DECEMBER 10 FOR PURPOSE OF JOINING THE ITALIAN VESSEL  
LEONARDO DA VINCI IN NEW YORK. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS POSED BY  
FSL REGARDING THEIR UNION AFFILIATION, THE SEVEN ADMITTED CGIL  
MEMBERSHIP. FSL SUSPENDED PROCESSING OF VISA APPLICATIONS AS  
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REQUIRED BY STANDING INSTRUCTIONS AND BECAUSE OF THE LATE HOUR  
SUGGESTED THEY RETURN ON DECEMBER 14 TO SPEAK TO CONSOFF AND TO  
APPLY FOR A WAIVER OF THEIR RESPECTIVE INELIGIBILITIES. THE SEVEN  
APPLICANTS APPARENTLY REPORTED TO THEIR CGIL CHIEFS WHO IMMEDIATE-  
LY THREATENED TO BLOCK THE DEPARTURE OF TWO CHARTER PLANES  
SCHEDULED TO CARRY CREW TO NEW YORK UNLESS ITALIAN LINE INTER-

VENED TO HAVE CONSULATE GENERAL'S DENIALS REVERSED. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE ITALIAN LINE APPEALED TO FORMIN FORLANI TO REQUEST AN EMBASSY REVIEW OF THE MATTER. IN INTERIM, CGIL SPREAD STORY TO FRIENDLY JOURNALISTS OF GENOA'S IL LAVORO (PSI LEFT) AND IL SECOLO XIX (LEFTIST), AND TURIN'S LA STAMPA.

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2. NEWS ACCOUNT IN ALL THREE PAPERS ALLEDGE PRESSURE FROM THE CGIL, THE ITALIAN LINE AND THE EMBASSY FORCED THE CONSULATE GENERAL TO REVERSE ITSELF AND ISSUE THE VISAS IN ORDER TO AVOID FURTHER EMBARRASSMENT TO THE US. ALL PAPERS SIMILARLY VIEW INCIDENT AS RESULTING FROM "MCCARTHY-TYPE" ATTITUDES ON PART OF UNIDENTIFIED CONSULATE GENERAL EMPLOYEE TOWARDS THE PCI AND CGIL, AND ADVISE THAT SUCH A STANCE IS UNREALISTIC IN LIGHT OF NEW "HISTORIC COURSE" -- READ PCI ABSTENTION ON ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT IN ITALY. IL LAVORO CHIDED PRIMIN ANDREOTTI FOR HIS FAILURE TO CONVINCE US OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON THAT ITALIAN-STYLE COMMUNISM IS NO LONGER A THREAT.

3. LA STAMPA'S CORRESPONDENT, PAOLO LINGUA, WHO IS A FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE LIGURIAN PRESS ASSOCIATION, IS EVEN FURTHER OFF BASE WITH HIS FACTS AND CONJECTURES. LINGUA PLACED BLAME FOR THE INCIDENT ON AN OVERZEALOUS VISA CLERK CARRYING OUT VISA INSTRUCTIONS DATING FROM THE COLD WAR ERA. HE SYMPATHIZED WITH THE CGIL POSITION AND SUGGESTED THAT THE UNION'S THREAT TO BOYCOTT THE CHARTER FLIGHTS FORCED THE USG TO BACK DOWN. LINGUA FURTHER MISLEADS HIS READERS TO BELIEVE THAT AN AGREEMENT

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EXISTS AMONG SEAMEN TO REMAIN SILENT IN DECLARING MEMBERSHIP IN MARXIST ORGANIZATIONS AND THAT NEITHER THE EMBASSY NOR THE CONSULATES NORMALLY CHALLENGE THE APPLICANT'S RESPONSE. HE VIEWED THESE SEVEN SEAMEN AS UNAWARE OF THE AGREEMENT AND THUS UNWITTING VICTIMS OF THEIR HONESTY.

4. LINGUA PRAISED EMBASSY'S ROLE IN GRANTING THE WAIVER WHILE PAINTING GENOA AS THE VILLIAN OF THE PIECE. HE EVEN SPECULATED THAT THE EMBASSY REBUKED CONSULATE GENERAL FOR REFUSING VISAS IN THE FIRST PLACE AND SUGGESTED THAT THE RESPONSIBLE EMPLOYEE WOULD BE TRANSFERRED BECAUSE OF MISGUIDED AND ANACRONISTIC ZEAL.

5. NEITHER LINGUA NOR THE OTHER JOURNALISTS BOTHERED TO CHECK THEIR FACTS OUT WITH THE CONSULATE. COPIES OF PRESS ARTICLES WITH TRANSLATIONS ARE BEING FORWARDED TO EMBASSY AND DEPARTMENT.

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6. COMMENT: I CAN ONLY SPECULATE THAT THE PCI/CGIL SEIZED ON THIS MINOR INCIDENT TO EMBARASS THE USG INTO SOFTENING ITS VISA POLICIES VIS-A-VIS THE PCI AND ITS ANCILLARY ORGANIZATIONS. LINGUA'S HYPOTHESIS THAT THE NEW CARTER ADMINISTRATION WILL RELAX VISA AND

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OTHER RESTRICTIONS ON THE COMMUNIST IS VERY MUCH IN LINE WITH THE ONGOING EFFORTS BY THE PCI TO WIN AND SIGN OF BENEVOLENCE OR ACCEPTANCE FROM THE USG. WORSE, FROM WHERE I SIT, IS THE ATTEMPT BY LOCAL JOURNALISTS TO PORTRAY THE GRANTING OF WAIVERS TO THE CGIL CREW AS NOTHING LESS THAN A CAVE IN, BY BOTH THE EMBASSY AND THE CONSULATE GENERAL, TO CGIL PRESSURES.

7. I DO NOT PLAN TO RESPOND FORMALLY TO THE PRESS ARTICLES IN HOPES THAT THE INCIDENT WILL BE SOON FORGOTTEN.  
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NEVERTHELESS, I WISH TO ALERT BOTH DEPARTMENT AND EMBASSY TO THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE LOCAL PCI AND ITS FRIENDS IN THE PREE MAY CHOOSE TO HAVE SOME MORE FUN ANY TIME THAT WE ISSUE A WAIVER TO A CGIL VISA APPLICANT. IN THAT EVENTUALITY, I WOULD APPRECIATE GUIDANCE FROM BOTH DEPARTMENT AND EMBASSY. DISCIULLO

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## Message Attributes

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**TAGS:** PFOR, CVIS, IT, US  
**To:** STATE ROME  
**Type:** TE  
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